Gmelin handbook of inorganic chemistry, 8th edition, *INDEX, Formula Index, 2nd Supplement*, Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, London, Paris, Tokyo.
Volume 1, Ac–$B_{1.9}$, x + 275 pages, DM1244, 1988. ISBN 3-540-93573-8.
Volume 2, B_2–Br_x, x + 308 pages, DM1382, 1988. ISBN 3-540-93574-6.
Volume 3, C–$C_{6.9}$, x + 280 pages, DM1269, 1989. ISBN 3-540-93575-4.
Volume 4, C_7–$C_{11.4}$, x + 254 pages, DM1160, 1989. ISBN 3-540-93584-3.
Volume 5, C_{12}–$C_{16.5}$, x + 310 pages, DM1414, 1989. ISBN 3-540-93588-6.

The Main Formula Index, published in twelve volumes between 1975 and 1980, covered all the volumes of the Main Series of the Eighth Edition of the Gmelin Handbook up to the end of 1974, as well as the New Supplement Series up to the end of 1973. The First Supplement to the Formula Index continued this Index up to the end of 1979, and the second Supplement (the subject of this review) covers the period from 1980 up to the end of 1987. When finished, this will complete the coverage of compounds published in the Gmelin Handbook between 1922 and 1987. This Second Supplement consists, to date, of five volumes, and the basic structure of the Main Formula Index has been retained. Thus, the Index lists all the elements, compounds, ions, and systems having definite composition that have been described in the text of the Handbook. The index is in three-column format: the first column gives the empirical formula, the second gives the conventional formula as it appears in the Handbook text (as well as any additional information or subdivisions), and the third gives the volume and page reference. A typical page is replicated in Fig. 1.

The empirical formula index is arranged in alphabetic and alphanumeric order, C and H are not placed first. Ions are always placed after neutral species and anions precede cations. Polymers of the type $\{AB\}_n$ are listed under AB, and multi-component systems (e.g. mixed crystals and melts) are listed under the empirical formulae of their components.

Entries with the same empirical formulae are distinguished in the second column, and arranged in the order compounds, isotopic species, polymers, hydrates, and multicomponent systems. Entries for elements and compounds with multiple occurrences are subdivided by topics, and an example is shown in Fig. 2.

A work of the size of the Gmelin Handbook relies upon the ease of access to its information for its success. It is no good having a totally comprehensive source of data if the information that you are seeking cannot be found, and this Formula Index makes that access easier. The use of empirical formulae as a means of indexing a chemical treatise is well established, and is particularly appropriate to the arrangement of information within the Handbook. The arrangement, clarity and presentation of these volumes is first class, and I do not believe that any library which possesses the Gmelin Handbook volumes published between 1980 and 1987 will wish to be without the volumes of the Index. It is a welcome addition to the series, adding to its value and utility.

This Index will be the last one to appear in printed form. The contents of the current, and previous, indexes are already contained in the Gmelin Formula Index (GFI) database, which can be accessed via STN. This is, in future, to be updated annually, and will obviously ensure a comprehensive coverage. However, one cannot help but wonder at a marketing policy which asks the user to buy this Index, at a not inconsiderable price, and then announces that this will be the last. If the user will, in future, have to access the Index through STN, as this will be the only option,

Fig. 1. An extract of the Formula Index, taken from Vol. 2.

Fig. 2. An example of subdivision by topic, taken from Vol. 2.

then why should the current, but rapidly dating, Index be purchased at all? Not that I object to computer databases (they are clearly the best and most efficient means of data retrieval), but this is an eccentric policy to adopt.

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Announcement

Gordon Research Conference on Organometallic Chemistry

The 1990 Gordon Research Conference on Organometallic Chemistry will be held at Salve Regina College, Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A., during the period June 25–29, 1990. For information on the program and further information or application materials please contact

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